



NEWS RELEASE

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WORKFORCE ALLIANCE, INC. RECEIVES RURAL DEVELOPMENT GRANT FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO SMALL BUSINESSES

LAKE PARK, FL, April 15, 2004 - Small businesses located around Lake Okeechobee in western Palm Beach County will soon be receiving assistance in seeking federal, state and county certification programs. Twenty small businesses located in Belle Glade, Pahokee and South Bay will benefit from technical assistance toward attaining certification in Federal-HUB Zone, 8a and Small Disadvantaged Business, State-Minority/Women Business Enterprises and County-Small Business Enterprise Certification.

In a ceremonial check presentation today, Workforce Alliance, Inc. received \$147,550 in grant funding from USDA Rural Development. "The Bush Administration is committed to the future of America's small businesses," said Rural Development State Director Charles Clemons, Sr. "By supporting the Workforce Alliance, we are providing entrepreneurs with the tools and training they need to become successful leaders in our business communities." The funding will be used by Workforce Alliance, Inc., to provide critical technical assistance to small businesses that do not have the experience to prepare, locate and otherwise develop the necessary information and documentation to obtain certifications.

"Florida small businesses will continue to receive the proper support to grow and succeed," said Congressman Mark Foley. "I want the entrepreneurs of today to become the leaders of tomorrow, and assistance like this will put them on the path to success."

Certifications in federal, state and county programs will assist area small businesses, fostering economic growth in the area. The award was made in conjunction with \$42,450 of assistance from Workforce Alliance, Inc., "leveraging" USDA funds for greater effect.

Rural Development is the lead Federal entity for rural development needs and administers financial and technical assistance through Rural Housing Programs, Rural Business-Cooperative Programs and Rural Utilities Programs. USDA Rural Development's mission is to deliver programs in a way that will support increasing economic opportunity and improve the quality of life of rural residents. As a venture capital entity, Rural Development provides equity and technical assistance to finance and foster growth in homeownership, business development, and critical community and technology infrastructure. Further information on USDA Rural Development can be obtained by contacting any USDA Service Center or by visiting USDA's web site at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/fl>

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